

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In this chapter, perspectives, pertinent literature and theoretical frameworks on the management of intergovernmental Relations in general and how these relate to this study are discussed. Overviews of the nature of the selected African countries are also profiled. However, unlike previous studies, which tended to focus only on the historical perspectives, attempts have been made to understand the Public Administrative approach that is paramount in managing these intergovernmental relationships and activities. The notion of making governance work better and bringing about efficient and effective service delivery through better coordinated and aligned sub-governmental systems, (in the form of an intergovernmental relations system) is one that should be earnestly pursued. Especially on the African continent, (hence recent debates on good governance have been high on the agenda) in order to improve the living standards of millions on the continent.

The theoretical framework that provides the basis for this study is fully explored to ensure the work is academically sound and grounded. In addition, the literature reviewed includes an exploration of the concept of the state, the nature of African states, particularly Nigeria and South Africa, as well as an overview of Public Administration principles that intergovernmental relations must take cognizance of, regardless of the governmental system (unitary or federal) adopted, has been attempted.

Theoretical perspectives in the study of intergovernmental relations

A few IGR approaches have been put forward by Roux *et al.*, (1996: 172). These approaches are:

- Democratic approach: proponents hold a separatist view and emphasise the right to autonomy of every government (regardless of level) to exist. This in the researcher's opinion will lead to a volatile situation and is a recipe for complexities. IGR should, in fact, aim for effectiveness and efficiency in the public service and this requires that conflict and competition are reduced and interdependence and the pursuit of a common agenda are promoted. This brings about a comparative advantage given that resources are pooled together and hence optimally utilised.
- Constitutional approach: accepts that there is a hierarchy of governments and this is a constitutional fact, since the constitution was seen as the instrument for determining intergovernmental relations and achieving harmony
- The Financial approach: where IGR is viewed from a financial perspective and the crux of the matter was what responsibilities do the spheres of government have and what financial resources are attached to it?
- Normative operational approach: comprises broad elements, such as values (material, cultural, spiritual, social, institutional and political values), as well as technical limitations, geographical factors and issues around the distribution of resources should be considered.

While it may be possible to profile a range of theories that could provide a framework for a Public Administration study such as this, the researcher has approached the issue of theories from a relevance and applicability point of view. This indicates that the theories and related issues that are being discussed here are not just exploratory but are focussed to ground the work herein specifically as intergovernmental relations, within federal systems and unitary states with federal characteristics alike, generally and inevitability involve elements of both cooperation and conflict. A position which Watts (1994: 9) argues brings about inevitable overlaps that occur in the exercise of the jurisdictions by different governments, as there is a

requirement for some co-ordination and harmonisation of the activities of governments.

Consequently, the following theoretical perspectives are explored:

a) A Systems perspective to the study of intergovernmental relations

System theory departs from the political system which takes inputs from society (usually consisting of mandates, demands, etc.) and processes them, the outcome of which could be policies. These are then fed back to the community, through policy related activities and then, a series of new wants and needs triggers the system again. In the systems where the inputs are processed, there is a need to take into account the various inevitable power relations and those principal actors within the intergovernmental relations structures.

Power relations in the government arena may occur in various forms and must not be viewed in a fragmented manner. Hence, Hague and Harrop (1982: 131) note that ‘although the structures of government can be divided, it is best to regard it (government) as an integral whole, for it is the relationships between these institutions, rather than their internal working, which is critical’. Boguslaw (2002: 410) extends this argument, noting that what makes organizations work are the relations and the culture that underlie partnerships. The use of the term “system” should therefore be understood broadly as it takes into account the cultural, political, social and other contexts that may shape the relationships in any system but particularly within intergovernmental relations sub-systems. Thus, the same governance or intergovernmental relations structure or model may exist in many places, but the unique organizational, cultural and social relationships (which are all part of the system) mediate how organisations operate within a given structure, and therefore, produce dissimilar outcomes.

The need for a system approach to the understanding of the workings of government is even

greater, given the networks that are inevitable. The task of coordination is daunting as governmental activities have grown beyond just providing security and peace to include a range of other activities, especially in developmental states and in the developing world. Hague and Harrop (1982: 182) argue that ‘the task of coordination becomes more difficult not just because government is bigger but also because the issues have grown more complex. Decisions have far-reaching and unforeseeable ramifications’.

Public administration activities take place within these systems and within the systems; there are sub-systems that must interact. Hence they are interrelated in their attempt to achieve specific outcomes. The role of public administration is therefore, to facilitate a positive outcome through these interactions and where possible, limit any unintended negative consequence.

For the purposes of this research, the researcher views the “system” as an integrated whole that consists of parts that can be likened to the analogy of the human body in a manner that reflects that parts are interrelated and interdependent, despite the fact that each body system may achieve functionality on its own and does impact of the activities of the entire body. Similarly, the execution and management of public affairs would require that the main elements of the systems theory which are; inputs, processes, outputs and feedback (as illustrated in the diagram below) are harnessed in a manner that promotes functionality as invariably, the activities of a sub-system (a part of government) affects the entire government.

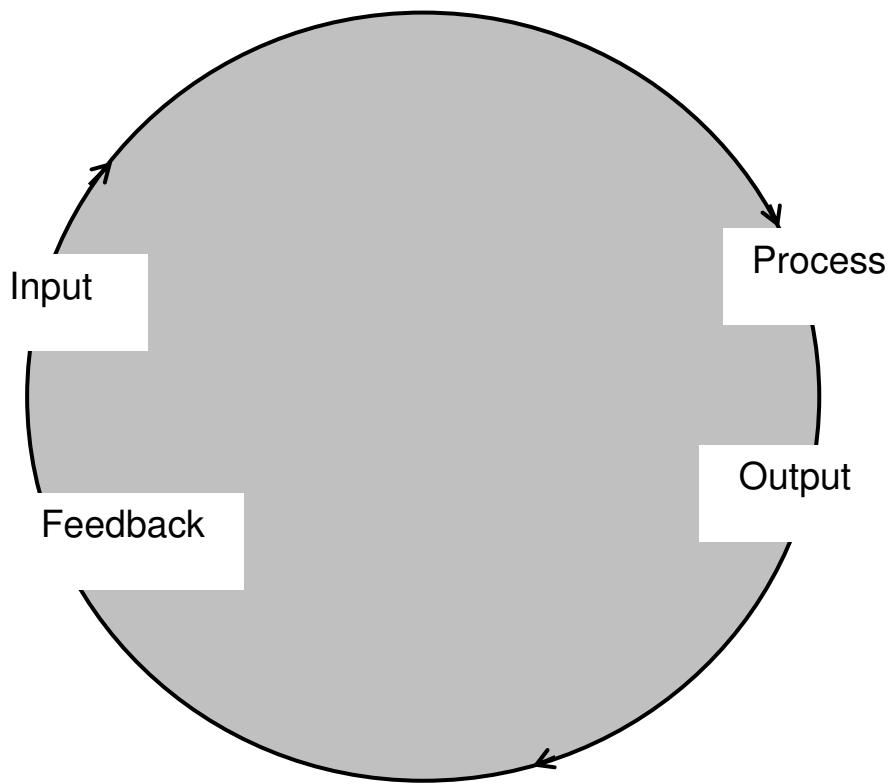


Figure 3.1 The systems theory (adopted from Van der Waldt and du Toit, 1997:95)

In the management of intergovernmental relations, and within the systems perspective, there is value in promoting a relational approach to intergovernmental relations. An integral part of this is the proper orientation of intergovernmental forums, so that they understand how they all fit together as a whole so that they can easily facilitate governmental processes rather than become stumbling blocks in the developmental process. This line of argument is endorsed by Boguslaw (2002:45), who notes that beneath the surface of political and functional approaches, analysis points to a different crisis – a social one. This stems from the fact that intergovernmental relations systems must consider relationships between and among institutions. The unravelling of the value of social partnership in intergovernmental relations actively seeks sustainable remedies through collective means by reorganizing relations to build upon the new realities of the intergovernmental relations structure proactively.

b) A functionalist approach to the systems theory

Having determined that the systems theory is multi-faceted (including political, cultural, economic and social contexts), the researcher reflects on the systems theory not only from a linkage (interdependence) point of view but also from a functional (execution) point of view. This means that the relationships among the various components of government are not enough in themselves. The vital question must be asked: To what extent are they achieving the expected and communicated broad goals of government? This is especially important in terms of ensuring coordination and appropriate outputs such as efficient and effective service delivery. Also critical to the function of the system are the questions: How does the intergovernmental relation sub-system within the system of government contribute to resolving blockages and facilitating government service delivery imperatives? How can these systems or interactions best be aligned and organized in a manner that ensures power relations and interests achieve the desired outcomes? This functional approach within the systems approach seeks to find a planned and structured way of organizing inputs within the systems analogy so that fragmentation, non-alignment, and misdirected or uncoordinated effort are better managed and grouped for efficiency, especially in the intergovernmental relations sub-system.

This functional approach to the utilization of the systems theory within the framework of intergovernmental relations seeks to manage the criticisms that intergovernmental relations generate structures that in themselves may be blockages in the process of ensuring efficient and effective service delivery to the public. This suggests that the functional approach should be integrated with the systems thinking, bringing about a model worth considering critically in intergovernmental relations circles and which the researcher terms a “*Functionalist model of the systems theory*”. Isioma Ile’s (2005) configuration of a functionalist model of the systems theory follows:

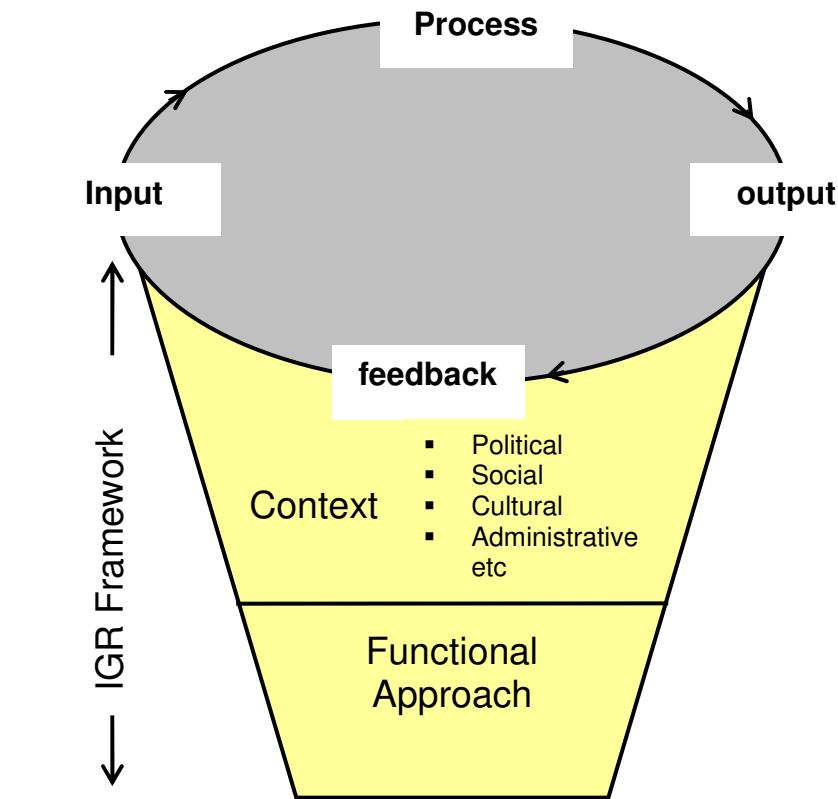


Figure 3.2 Ile's (2006) configuration of the functionalist model of the systems theory

According to Boguslaw (2002:37-38), functionalist theory suggests that in the study of society, ‘we should look at how the various parts or institutions combine to give society continuity over time (including intergovernmental relations). This theoretical approach can be used to explain why partnerships emerge, persist, and how these efforts fulfil organizational and societal needs’. A criticism of the functional approach is however, that it fails to incorporate an understanding of power in the environment or the role of organizations as agents in shaping society, those failing to make explicit the implicit order of relations that underlie political relationships and thereby failing to connect the institutional and societal interests. The challenge, then, is for an “institutional analysis to determine which relationships need such consistency and cohesion, and how to structure

relationships amongst the various organizations and still maintain their relative authority, autonomy, and independent spheres of action' (Wunsch & Olowu, 2000:81).

Chaumont-Chancelier attempts to rationalize those relations arguing that the

'Complex order can be explained with a spontaneous approach, as its name indicates, it is not concerned with the formation of any particular rule. It tries to explain the existence of social order, of this complex web of rules and the institutions leading to a recurrent social pattern of cooperation and coordination. This network is complex since it can be seen as a network of interrelated institutions, as an interweaving of many kinds of rules, some of them designed as spontaneous, explicit or tacit, enforced deliberately ... and so on' (2003: 70).

c) A Public Administration functionalist approach to the systems theory

The value of the systems theory and its integration with the functional approach is that the political context which is an integral part of the systems theory is not lost in an effort to promote functionalism. The ideal is therefore a theoretical framework embedded in the systems theory but one that takes cognizance of context and bridges any gaps that may have existed with a narrow functional approach. This suggests that an integration of the systems theory and the functional approach as well as the principles of Public Administration should inform and guide the processes.

The core of this research is the researcher's assertion that within the functionalist model of the systems theory, the guidelines to ensuring efficiency and effectiveness are the application of the processes of Public Administration. The functional approach therefore has immense value with regard to the usefulness of a specific intergovernmental relations system in the achievement of the desired outcome. It asks the questions (even in political, administrative systems and government sub-systems such as intergovernmental relations), that although models adopted in various countries vary greatly in their institutional arrangements, are there certain functions which must be performed if it is to survive and operate efficiently? (Hague & Harrop, 1982:11).

Below is a diagrammatic conceptualization of Isioma Ile's (2005) configuration of the Public administration functionalist systems approach to the management of IGR.

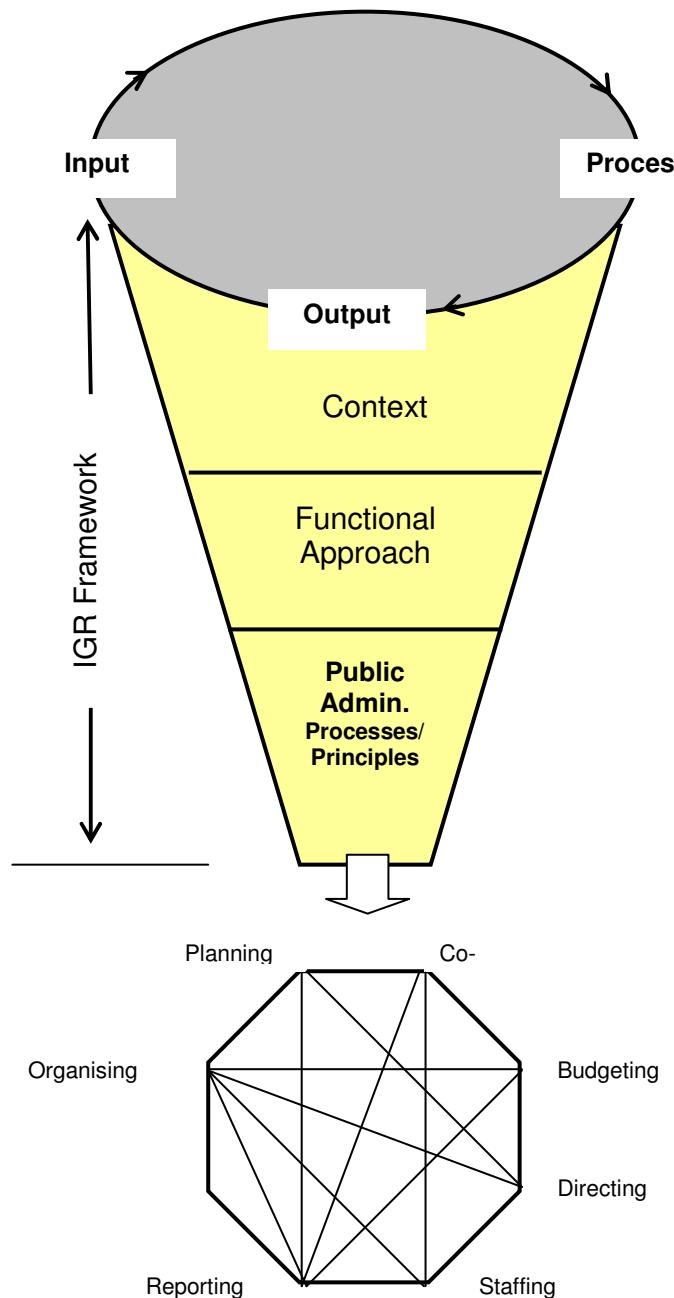


Figure 3.3 The Public administration functionalist systems approach to the management of IGR

One of the principal considerations is the need for clarity of roles, expectations and mandates through effective communication among the relevant stakeholders in the intergovernmental relations sub-system whereby knowledge created is shared from various

actors in the various forums. This brings about deepened democracy and good governance, and not just a superficial alignment of goals and direction amongst the various spheres or levels of government.

Wunsch and Olowu (2000: 80) note that ‘nested relationships can provide cohesion where national priorities and requirements such as procedures for final adjudication of intergovernmental disputes.... are spelt out’. This suggests that intergovernmental relations systems that intergovernmental relations systems that are designed to be proactive may better respond to public sector challenges. In addition, there should be clear expectations and mandates for coordination, a culture of participation, and strong leadership that ensure the efficient utilization of scarce resources and the alignment of activities with a view to strengthening linkages, associations, networks and strategic alliances with the government.

Within the mandate of good governance, broad areas of discretion as well as the ability to negotiate lateral linkages amongst diverse units can exist. This facilitates locally orientated programmes, allowing units to share concerns, complement each others skills and bring about economies of scales. This Public Administration functionalist approach to systems can meet the legitimate and unavoidable requirements for cohesion and consistency without seeking centralization of rule, homogenization, or precluding a very broad autonomy for organizations.

The practice of intergovernmental relations in states: a conceptual framework

Iduje notes that

‘Public administration at whatever state of development does not operate in a vacuum. From simple societies to complex ones, it is totally unreal to think of public administration as existing simply to execute political decisions of political leaders, unaffected by the private political or ideological convictions of the administrators themselves’(1993: 96).

With the role of the state transcending security functions, and a broad range of activities requiring state leadership, the state must continually seek to create an enabling and conducive environment through the development and the facilitation of an appropriate policy and regulatory framework. According to Dunleavy and O’Leary (1987:1-3), the abstraction of a state can be determined either organizationally or functionally.

- i) Organizational abstraction reflects state institutions and government in particular, with regard to the process of making rules, controlling, guiding or regulating.
- ii) Functional abstraction relates to the state as a set of institutions which carries out particular goals, purposes or objectives.

The reality of the state does not allow for one categorization without the other. The organizational categorization is a pre-requisite for the functionality of the state. Within the intergovernmental relations realm, if structures are determined organizationally, it could be problematic and lead to a superficial system, but if the intergovernmental relations are determined with emphasis on functionality, which, in turn, determines structures then the system could be better streamlined. In specific instances where intergovernmental relations structures have mushroomed, the role of the state with regard to how best to facilitate institutions, within and across the different spheres of government and still pursue joint agendas or minimize administrative or political crisis remain paramount.

Given the pluralist nature of societies, an appropriate management strategy provides an opportunity to examine the constraints, utility, costs, strategies and the politics of intergovernmental relations forums in structuring and shaping actions around a specific area of concern. Dunleavy and O’Leary (1987: 13) define pluralism as the ‘belief that there are, or ought to be, many things. It offers a defence for multiplicity in beliefs, institutions and societies, and opposes monism – the belief that there is, or ought to be, only one thing’. It

therefore departs from the premise that reality cannot be explained from only one angle. Similarly, Intergovernmental relations seeks to pursue multi-faceted institutions, who come together to address specific issues and by so doing evolve an integrated approach to problem solving.

Pluralism promotes decentralization which necessitates the development of intergovernmental relations. Decentralization, in turn, helps prevent the emergence of democratic alienation, provides multiple points of access and sites for input into the governmental agenda, and enhances the participation of a broad spectrum of public officials and politicians thereby providing for administrative and legislative interface. The processes of decentralization in the case of Nigeria and South Africa are constitutionally entrenched. The idea is devolution of powers to lower levels/spheres of government, especially at the local government sphere/level specifically, where the local decision-making powers must be adhered to, whether the state is unitary or federal constitution.

The pluralist theory has relevance within the systems theory as it seeks to muster the support of a multiplicity of actors, usually with diverse interests to find relevance and to function as parts of an integrated whole within the system. The approach remains critical to the current practise and reflects on how governments can benefit from the pluralist approach by constantly approaching key issues with varied theories and from different angles in an effort to be analytical in seeking solutions to some of the governance challenges that are faced.

The issue of decentralisation seems to have taken root in both unitary and federal states. Dunleavy and O’Leary (1987: 305) note that, in some unitary states, virtually all responsibility for social policy has nonetheless been delegated to elected sub-national governments, citing the example of Denmark, where local authorities account for 66% of all

levels of decentralisation of all public spending. These issues of decentralisation which has reinforced the need to consider and reconsider studies in the area of intergovernmental relations necessitate the various levels of government to work together in more integrated fashion.

In some cases, this need for coordination has brought about complicated systems that have not necessarily evolved with clear principles and guidelines. The challenge of maximizing the forums created by intergovernmental relations structures in a way that ensures that debates are robust and coordination aligned, requires that the management of intergovernmental relations must consider administrative processes in all activities as the structures on their own can achieve little or nothing on their own. The management of these intergovernmental relations networks can be two fold as identified by Dunleavy and O'Leary (1987: 306):

- Networks in which the central departments deal with sub-national agencies in a clearly hierarchical fashion, and have the capacity to remould programme characteristics or institutional arrangements in a policy area if things go wrong. This management approach could be linked to the centre periphery theory. Using Nigeria as an example, Ayeni & Olowu (1988:215) note that ‘the result was that by 1993, over 90% of all state and local government revenues were coming exclusively from the federal sources. This situation was to persist as long as the federal treasury was abundantly supplied with the revenue from petroleum’. The implication, therefore, was that the active agreement of other actors did not need to be secured before policy could proceed, eliminating an opportunity for various levels of government to question, defend and muster support for their own vision.
- A management system in which the responsibilities for different policy issues have been split up between agencies. Given that policy formulation and analysis takes

place at different levels/spheres of government (usually at the centre government) and the implementation at another sphere of government (usually at the periphery of governmental systems), indications are that there may be a lacuna, especially if the interlocking administrative and management systems are weak. The case for a solid management of the intergovernmental relations framework is that it allows for differentiations in the contexts and sub-systems of government.

Having explored some of the underlying threads in the conceptual understanding of the state, attempts are now made to deepen the discussions within the context of the African state in general and, more specifically, within the context of the selected case studies.

Nature of the African state

Wunsch and Olowu (2000: 64) note that ‘Africa’s march to independence began with substantial cash reserves, a strong domestic agricultural economy, a skilled and professionalized workforce a popular leader and hope for the future was bright. Today these hopes have faded’.... They further noted that the critical difference between African states and most other states across the world, however, lies in the qualitative dimension, specifically on the distribution of authority, responsibility and resources available to central versus local governments. They highlight the following as some of the reasons for the over-centralisation of responsibilities and resources:

- Limited resources allocation: while 17% of national spending is controlled by local government in France and 66% is the figure for Sweden, in Africa, the average spending at local government level is 2%. This suggests that the more responsibilities are devolved and adequate resources sourced, the more the state will be able to meet its service delivery imperatives.
- The limited skilled personnel at local and state/provincial levels. This will aggravate the situation should more responsibilities be devolved to spheres with limited

capacity.

Currently, the economies of most African countries are struggling; the public service is demotivated; leadership is not quite credible; issues of political instability are a shadow of governments; and skilled personnel have continued to leave the shores of our continent. Strategies aimed at reforming and re-energising the political and administrative systems on the continent are at this point crucial. This may necessitate ‘a system of strong governance conceptualized as composed of many rule-making organizations, linked with one another in rule-governed relationships which both encourage general reciprocity and allow for variations of choice and policy within that general framework’ (Ostrom 1985: 81).

The need for a shift from centralized states to one that is able to attain and properly manage acceptable levels of decentralization requires the following:

- Devolution of real powers, responsibility and authority
- Shrinkage in the role of the centre including budget
- Encouraging greater participation in politics and government activities
- Regulating the role and power of public servants so that they are only able to execute the necessary tasks and not facilitate their own interests. (Wuncsh & Olowu, 2000: 67).

While the nature of governmental structure, especially mechanisms around intergovernmental relations can create avenues for reform, structures by themselves cannot achieve the desired change. There must be rules that encourage exploratory relationships in the governance of the African state. Hence, Wunsch and Olowu (2000:79) note that the challenge to ‘organize, learn and act with one another to construct the more complex social, economic and political relationships which are necessary for development to occur. The role

of the state is to set the stage rather than to write the scripts'. For a meaningful reform in the African continent, Ekwe-Ekwe, notes:

'it should be stressed that the human resources of any given society constitutes its engine of development. In Africa, these human resources have been trapped in an exogenously-oriented existence ... The future direction of Africa must therefore be fundamentally geared towards the interiorisation of the use of African human resources – a minimum requirement for the survival of the African race' (1993: 99).

Nigeria

Nigeria, located in West Africa, is the world's most populous black and African nation. Its population is 'around 120 million drawn from some 250 ethnic groups with diverse cultures and religious background... with about 30% accounting for the urban population' (Ayeni 2000: 31). The population patterns suggest that resources have to be efficiently utilised in the urban areas but even more importantly in the rural areas, where the majority of the population still lacks basic minimum services.

Most democracies have involved agreements allocating a significant degree of autonomy over local affairs to constituent segmental groups. These guarantees, which are enshrined, in principle, are intended to ensure that participation by minority parties are maintained (Lijphart, 1977: 41). The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Part 1 (2) pronounces Nigeria as a federal state consisting of 36 states, consisting of seven hundred and sixty eight local government areas.

A well-resourced nation, in terms of natural and human resources, Nigeria could have done better but has been plagued, with several undemocratic and self-imposed governments that only sought to deplete the nation's resources for their own benefit. Ekwe-Ekwe (1993: 87) argues that what the Nigerian example shows is the performance of a string of African leaderships, endowed with the resource, the existence of which they fully acknowledge, that could easily have been used to radically transform the living conditions of their people, but

whose choice of was action instead hemmed in by a megalomaniac disposition to deprive their society of their newly found wealth.

Present-day Nigeria which consisted of three former colonial territories and subsequently after amalgamation in 1914 was reorganised as two territories, namely northern and southern protectorates were administered separately within the machinery of government. The first opportunity for a central legislature to become engaged in national deliberation was only accorded in the 1940's and early 1950's with the introduction of the Richard's Constitution in 1946 and the Macphersons's Constitution of 1951. This provided for a quasi-federal system within a colonial government, giving more autonomy to the regions. With the dawn of independence and the scramble for political control, this promoted interpersonal rivalry, intertribal rivalry, regionalism and ethnicity at the expense of nationhood.

Federalism cannot be truly substantiated as a system that has evolved out a plan but rather one that has been imperative for the promotion of peace – hence, the incomplete and rushed metamorphosis from a unitary state into federalism. This can be largely attributable to the incomplete and rushed transformation from a unitary state into federalism. Despite a shift towards federalism, the reality has been one that has promoted a stronger ethnic identity and weaker nation-state identity. This reasoning is captured by nationalists, such as Aminu Kano who notes in Elaigwu:

‘I think the regional grouping was a result of sudden awakening...But this was misdirected, that is to say; it is a crude form of interpretation of awakening...the sudden realization of “we can take power” resulted in ethnic grouping and therefore regionalism’(1994: 230).

The outcome led to a situation where regions wanted to extend their authority, making the national stage strongly competitive. The federal government thus remained very attractive and whoever controlled the federal government controlled the Republic of Nigeria. In the

quest to control the federal government, tools of numerical value, such as the census, were employed to the dissatisfaction of smaller tribes and nations.

With sharp differences in cultural inclinations and identity, including religious differences, the battle was further intensified as it was now both ethnic and religious in nature. Sadly, the mistrust and competition that had transcended ethnic and religious rivalry promoted military regimes as the regions, which in some areas were very strong, had to be curtailed through a coup de'tat as this was the fastest way to establish control.

Within the complexities of the state, as Watts (1999:57) states, and among the areas which have been noted to pose challenges to federalism, there have been degrees of diversity within federal societies, differences between territorial and non-territorial diversity, differing impacts of cross-cutting and of cumulatively reinforcing social cleavages. Others include the impact of ethnic nationalism, the particular characteristics of bipolar societies, the trend to asymmetrical arrangements within federations, the increasing number of confederal associations, federal financial arrangements, and the role of political parties in federal systems. These are all factors which should be considered in the development of intergovernmental relations management strategies.

Over the years, intra and inter state conflict has certainly not eased, with issues of asset sharing between governments at state and local government levels remaining paramount.

Elaigwu pertinently observes that:

‘Nigerians complain about the powers of the centre, especially the fiscal powers of the centre. The great dependence of sub-national units on grants from the centre has generated heated debates for a review of the current revenue-sharing formula and an adjustment of the legislative lists of the various tiers of government’ (1994: 237).

This has continually created tensions such that ‘lingering power imbalances between the states and the federal government have contributed to the air of mutual suspicions and

animosity by exacerbating fears of ethnic domination' (Williams, 1992: 113). This suggests the need for various reforms across a number of areas, including intergovernmental relation. This is not peculiar to Nigeria and may be the case for a number of federations. Opeskin (1998: 21) notes that the coordination and adjustment of fiscal relations in federations have often given rise to several mechanisms for intergovernmental relations. These deserve special mention because of the tendency for fiscal issues to dominate intergovernmental relations.

In a country heavy reliant on the exploration of crude oil which accounts for over 80% of its foreign earning, 28 years of Nigeria rule has been dominated by the military. Despite Nigeria's human and natural resources, the nation is far from reaching its potential (Ayeni, 2000: 32-33.). While reforms have advocated for the training of public servants, re-orientation, re-structuring, performance management (Ayeni, 2000: 34) , it would appear that the value that intergovernmental relations can play with regard to strengthening the governmental system may present an additional opportunity to tackle governance issues.

South Africa

The apartheid system was brought to an end in 1994 with the first democratically elected government being put in place. The post-1994 government has been saddled with a range of challenges which directly impacted on its governance capabilities. This includes imbalances in skills levels between whites and blacks, low productivity and an inefficient bureaucracy. In an attempt to reform the bureaucracy, the reform of intergovernmental relations sub-system is inevitable. A critical observation put forward by Ayeni (2000:40) is that 'efforts to drive implementation and service delivery are often not optimised because of the duplication of efforts amongst the agencies/departments'. This is echoed by the 1997 white paper on the transformation of the Public Service which identifies critical elements of good governance

that should be treated as priority areas. These include integration of services, promotion of accountability, responsiveness and the upholding of high standards of ethical conduct.

The nature of the state could differ in various ways, in terms of power arrangements and the management of the relationships that exist in the state. The South African unitary state is rooted in democratically styled structures that have been shaped by the 1996 Constitution (as this is the foundation of all governmental interactions) but with some strong federal elements. In certain unitary states, such as France and Britain, local governments have continued to display significant roles with great autonomy such that central government cannot in practice treat local governments as mere things of wax which can be dissolved and shaped at will (Hague & Harrop, 1982:44). This is an acceptable practice, given that what transpires in reality is that there are unitary states with varying levels of decentralization and stronger attributes of federalism, but in other cases they may be more centralized with more degrees of unitarism. The South African model borrows elements from the two typologies of governmental arrangements and attempts to fuse them in a manner that best suits its unique context.

The nature of intergovernmental relations in South Africa has shifted considerably in the decade with specific regard to the provision of the bill of rights, power-sharing mechanisms between spheres, execution of assigned roles in the new democracy and the promotion of cooperative government. A fundamental component of the constitution for the Republic of South Africa is that the relationship of the spheres of governments is clearly spelt out as *distinct, interdependent and interrelated*. It further requires the three spheres of government to function within a framework known as principles of cooperative government.

The above sets the scene for a non-competitive governmental structure. However, given that the intent captured in the constitution has to be made a reality and within the scope of intergovernmental relations, attention needs to be paid to the statutory bodies (those with legislative backing) and non-statutory bodies (these constituted by government for a specific task) as these can promote intergovernmental relations in the form of committees, boards or a range of other bodies (Kuye, *et al*, 2002: 45).

For the achievement of governmental goals, including cooperative government as proposed by the Republic of South Africa, the 1996 Constitution (Chapter 3) provides for an intergovernmental relations system that seeks to improve coordination and alignment. The critical role of intergovernmental relations suggests that ways should be continually sort to improve the system, as this may lead to improved governance with stronger elements of policy alignment, interaction and coordination within and among spheres/levels of government.

There are a host of structures that exist to promote intergovernmental relations; they all work towards a broader goal, which is principally to promote service delivery at various levels by providing clarity for each arm/sphere of government and to ensure that their operations are smooth without necessarily overstepping their respective bounds. With the spheres of government being distinctive, interdependent and interrelated, critics, such as Watts (see Klaaren, 1995: 5) argue that cooperative governments can also have a darker side. Excessive emphasis on harmony and cooperation can mean intergovernmental agreements that are the lowest common denominator, or that are too watered down to be effective. Such arrangements can lead to excessive delay as governments work towards effective agreement. This may not be too far from the South African experience as the government of the day strives to find its own balance between autonomy and

interdependence, centralization and decentralization, competition and consensus. Both sides of the coin are essential to the broad goal of ensuring that systems can respond and adapt to the changing world in which they are embedded, and which they serve.

An overview of Public Administration principles and functions that govern IGR

Public Administration enables government to meet its mandate by providing capacity that is required to ensure that the expectations and mandates of government and society are met. These government activities across various levels have consequences for the governance system in general. The complexity of intergovernmental relation can be portrayed by the organization of public administration. According to Nnoli (2000: 45), Public Administration is organized in two ways: laterally and vertically. Laterally, the government creates departments or ministries using functional activities. This suggests that the need to create a new forum, where ministries can share information, monitor and get feedback from officials who are dealing with the implementation issues, is inevitable. On the other hand, certain state functions are concurrent in nature suggesting that there is also a need for coordination across spheres or levels of government, making coordination a critical task from an intergovernmental relations perspective. Nnoli (2000: 49) declares that ‘effective coordination of various arms of public administration is the wheel around which its efficiency and effectiveness revolve’.

The importance of an efficient and effective intergovernmental relations model for any country including democracies in Africa cannot be over-emphasised. Ademolekun (1986: 89) notes that IGR as a concept is usually associated with states having a federal administration systems where the relationships between the federal, central or national governments and the major sub-national unit (province, region or state) are formally spelt out in the constitution. Is that to say there are intergovernmental relations only in a federal

state? This assertion by Ademolekun (1986: 89) is important in this research because, although South Africa is a unitary state, the reality is that the leadership of the country has to contend with the varied relationships between organs of government in an effort to achieve governmental goals. In other words, a country may be unitary in nature but have federal characteristics and vice-versa in terms of the implementation of governmental systems.

Governments can achieve efficiency and effectiveness (if linked to intergovernmental relations objectives), especially with regard to the quality of intergovernmental relations inputs, processes and outputs. The principles that underpin the inputs, functions that underpin the processes and the desired output from an intergovernmental relations perspective are now outlined. The normative principles of Public Administration provide the cornerstone for the foundation of intergovernmental relations. These are values which a society holds dear and which invariably influence the business of government. According to Du Toit *et al* (2002: 102), they usually emanate from:

- i) The body politic: These include the principles contained in the constitution as well as those relating to the authority of the legislature. In both countries that have been selected (as case studies), the constitution is the supreme law of the land. It (and other legislations which emanate from it through the legislative arm of government) provides the framework within which public officials and politicians carry out their roles and exercise authority. The legislature is the law-making arms of the government; the executive is the implementing agency and the judiciary monitors and enforces the application of the various legal frameworks enshrined in the country's laws. These guide the interactions of officials and politicians alike in the intergovernmental relations framework. The supremacy of the constitution is applicable to democratic governments only. In the past, when the military had taken over in Nigeria for instance, usurpers have had to suspend the constitution. The

consequences were an intensified struggle for state power which discarded the rule of law and breed an environment of distrust and ethnic rivalry amongst others (Decalo, 1985: 209-237).

- ii) Legal framework of the nation: This regulates acceptable and non-acceptable behaviour among public officials in the execution of their roles by advocating that the roles must be performed in such a manner that reflects the fact that adequate consideration has been given to the *ultra vires* modes.
- iii) Social value systems: These are derived from society and require that governmental business is conducted in an acceptable fashion in terms of what is socially acceptable and what is defined as good. Intergovernmental relations are largely a human interactionist activity, so the values which are acceptable in that particular society are expected to be inherent in the country's officials. These values may have developed over time in the society and are context related including political, historical and cultural.

These normative guides of Public Administration are applicable to intergovernmental relations and should be present in Nigeria and South Africa alike. These normative principles of intergovernmental relations provide the framework for which public administration functions (administrative and management alike) are performed. In the broad field of administration, a set of principles referred to by the acronym POSCORB reflects the function of administrators (Adebayo, 2000: 13). These functions are equally relevant in intergovernmental relations activities. They are therefore, briefly outlined below:

- a) **Planning:** Broadly outlines what, who, when, where, and how activities will be organized and accomplished with the greatest efficiency. A preliminary activity in planning is to ensure that roles and role relationships as clear, detailed and practical as possible. This includes 'the interventions and programmes of government, the means

available internally and externally to accomplish them ...who is to benefit from them...should be pre-determined' (Nnoli, 2000: 44). The planning processes especially for development purposes are an important mechanism for such aspects as inter-ministerial coordination or cluster planning as in the case of South Africa.

- b) **Organizing:** This deals with the formal structure that demonstrates how works flows are determined, arranged and executed in a manner that ensures that the organisational objectives are achieved. It is a planned and structured arrangement that includes design (and re-design) of systems, and the manner in which services are delivered to the people in a particular country, thereby giving it a sharper cutting edge to meet the demands of the public. Organization should be beneficial to society and a means to an end and not an end in itself. 'Management reform in the public service must take account of the administrative systems in which these take place if success to be achieved' (Politte & Bouckaert, 2000: 6-17).
- c) **Staffing:** This devises strategies that ensure that there are clear processes for the organisation to attract, develop, utilise and retain appropriate staff to achieve the organisational goals. Bretton (1962:144) notes, 'No degree of institutional refinement of a social or political system will be adequate if administrative skills are non-existent or inadequate'. The quality of staff is even more important as human interactions are at the core of any intergovernmental relations noting that it is 'human beings clothed within the office who are the real determiners of what relations between government units should be' (Agrannof, 1993: 6). This suggests that staff must be continually trained and oriented to reflect the normative guidelines discussed earlier.
- d) **Directing:** This advocates for strong and clear leadership, ensuring that guidance is continually given to staff such that the vision is attained. This suggests that the public sector manager should have a strong conceptual understanding of how the various parts of the systems, although different, all work towards a common agenda, thereby reducing

efforts expended in intergovernmental relations conflicts, including the diffusion of tension that may exist as a result of the conflicts or competition between units and spheres/levels (which may altogether be unnecessary and completely counter productive).

- e) **Coordinating:** This function attempts to synthesise the activities of the organisation and to achieve desired levels of harmony. The need for coordination is required across a range of intergovernmental relations activities. One of such critical areas that requires strong coordination is policy. Given that intergovernmental relations are embedded in policy issues that relate to policy alignment, these have to be carefully thought through especially as it is further complicated in the context of the multi-level governments as is the case with Nigeria and South Africa. This must also take cognizance of policy issues related to administrative and political interfaces. Adebayo (2000: 71) asserts that ‘the corollary of this is the relationship that ought to exist between the political chief and the administrator in their joint roles of policy making ...’.
- f) **Reporting:** Within the sphere of intergovernmental relations, this provides an opportunity for the monitoring and evaluation (which seeks to measure actual against the expected outcomes and to gauge the impact of the inputs) of various activities which should have taken place as well as the quality of the services that have been rendered. This promotes communication and the gathering of information/data which may be crucial for other related managerial decisions. Adebayo (2000: 16) notes that there are certain functions and processes which form the bedrock of the responsibilities of a government. These functions include reporting as it allows for regulating issues of conflict resolution, conciliation, balancing, and compromise in ensuring adequate service delivery.
- g) **Budgeting:** This is a critical function in the sense that almost (if not all) governmental activities require the utilisation of resources. Given that the demands of the system are

greater than the resources available, the decisions around budget allocation for purposes of intergovernmental relations effectiveness remain at the top of the agenda. Adebayo (2000:132) notes that one of the main tools of management is the budget. It controls the programme and the activities of any organisation and determines the scope of work performance in Nigeria. However, it ‘unfortunately, over the years the system of annual budget in government has been a farce... No attempt is made to get down to the principles of a budget...’.

Having discussed the framework for operations (normative guidelines) and administrative processes (functions) that are inherent in intergovernmental relation activities, the challenge is to ensure that the following outcomes are strongly reflected:

- An effective communication and commitment strategy. Drucker (1968:22) notes that the flaw in dealing with communicating (which is core for intergovernmental relations) is that the strategy may contain no action commitment.
- A strong public accountability element that regulates and holds officials accountable for their activities or inactivity.
- An increased participation and inclusive consultation given that government and the forum are not an end in themselves but an agency for development. Hence the facilitative nature of governance must be advocated for.
- Strong visionary leadership and strategic management at various levels of intergovernmental relations process at all spheres.

Chapter summary

An intergovernmental relation is one of the critical blocks for government to achieve efficiency and effectiveness. The systems theory provides the analytical framework for this research, but this has been modelled to integrate the functional approach as well as the

functions of public administration. The inputs, processes and the outputs that determine the quality of intergovernmental relations in terms of the administrative processes as well as management processes must be interrogated. If appropriate quality is executed, the output of the intergovernmental relations processes will be positive but if otherwise, it will have a negative output. It can therefore be deduced that the management of intergovernmental relations shows to what extent government will be able to meet the needs of the citizens of a particular country.

Within this broad framework, attempts have been made to provide a conceptual understanding of the state, an overview of the African state in general, with particular reference to Nigeria and South Africa. In most instances, the transformation of the public services is an important tool that must be engaged. This suggests that processes must be analysed in an integrated manner.